

(18)  
BETWEEN  
M<sup>r</sup>. ROBERT ROGERS,  
OF  
WAKEFIELD,



AND  
M<sup>r</sup>. THOMAS WALKER,

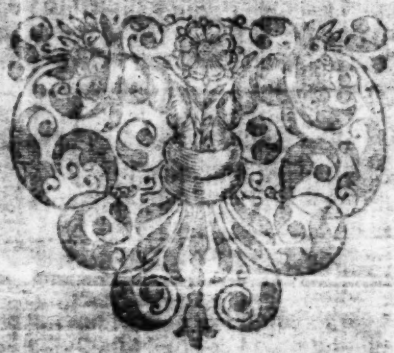
The present VICAR there,

TOUCHING  
BAPTISM.



LONDON,  
Printed by J. G. for Richard Leedes at the White Lyon  
in St. Pauls Church-yard, 1836. 102. (18)

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 MR ROBERT ROGERS  
 OF  
 WAKFIELD  
 AND  
 M. THOMAS WALKER  
 The printer & engraver  
 TOUCHING  
 THE



LONDON  
 Printed by J. Smith for Richard Smith at the Golden Ball in St. Pauls Church-yard 1794

# The occasion of these following Letters was this :

**A**N urgent necessity (an Infant unbaptized, and in imminent danger of death) put me upon it to goe to Mr. *Walker* our present Vicar at *Wakefield* upon the week day, to desire from him (what he conceive was his duty, the Charge of Soules being at present upon him) that he would administer the Ordinances to my weak Child, partly that I might discharge the office of a Father, and that my Child might not want the benefit of the Ordinance: After much impertinent discourse, as of *Christs* going 50. miles to *John* to be Baptized, and the like, the main ground of his refusal seem'd to be the want of a Congregation on the week day; and though I offered to bring ten or twenty persons for a Congregation, and my Child (notwithstanding its weakness) to the Church, yet he still refused, saying, *It was contrary to his Judgement*: (although he had done it formerly to others) so the result was, That he neither would Baptize my child in that necessity, nor give way to any other to doe that Christian and charitable office for me within his parish.

Upon the Lords day following, after forenoon Sermon, I desired him to satisfy me from the Word of God, how he could in conscience dispence with that neglect, and what the Scripture made out against Private Baptisme in *A case of necessity*. He promised, and I expected satisfaction in the afternoon, where in stead of Scripture he produced the Rubrick of the Common-Prayer before Publick Baptisme, and read it publiakly to his People, so farre as he thought it might conduce to his purpose: but when he came to that expostition, *Slavetholfe, (as Necessity so require) Children may at all times be Baptized at home*, he left it out, and read it not, nor gave the Congregation any satisfaction in it; not much unlike the *Devills* quotation of Scripture, when he would have perswaded Christ to have thrown himselfe from the battlements of the Temple, for that wanting that satisfaction which he promised, and I expected from him, I sent him the following Letter;

Sir, It is the Word of God, not the Rubrick of the Common-Prayer, must satisfy me in my desire, when you shall give me such satisfaction. I hope you will doe it (ingrossly, without adding or diminishing, I rather desire an argument ad rem, than ad hominem, I am unwilling to make any farther use in the busynesse; if I may receive satisfaction from you in writing under your hand, which when I have received, I shall submit and remaine

Yoursound, Robert Roome

Wakefield, March 6. 1655

SIR,

Could heartily wish that you were not rather inclin'd to cavill, than desirous of satisfaction, which I have good ground to suspect, not onely from your evasive answers, but also from your slighting and undervaluing the constant judge-

from the generality of those, that are Pious, and Learned; You cannot but know, if you understand any thing, that it is more proper for me than you in this particular to require satisfaction; because you desire me to do that (which as I told you, when you were with me) is against my judgement: according to which I am bound to act; otherwise I should condemn my selfe in the things which I allow, contrary to that of the Apostle, *Rom. 14. 22.* But however I shall propound (according to your desire) one or two particulars to your serious consideration; and shall pray that God may set them home upon your spirit.

1. Duly weigh that Christs Baptisme was not private, but publick, yea though Christ were put to much inconvenience thereby, as will appear from *Math. 3. 13.* Now it is an unquestioned maxime amongst Divines, both Episcopall and others, grounded upon *Math. 11. 19.* that Christs morall acts (as this of submission to Baptisme was, as appears from *Math. 3. 13.*) are to be imitated by his people.

2. Consider the nature of the Sacrament of Baptisme, its a publique or distance, not private: now publique Ordinances are to be dispensed in a publique manner: That it is a publique Ordinance, I prove from Scripture, *Math. 28. 19.* and also from the nature of the Ordinance it selfe, *It being a Signe and Seale of Initiation into the Visible Church.* Whereas you desired from me an expresse text of Scripture, that Baptisme ought to be publick; I answer, that it is sufficient if it be proved by direct consequence from Scripture, though it be not expressed in *terminis*: There is no expresse example or precept in Scripture, either for Infants Baptisme, or for admission of Women to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, yet none of the Orthodox doe question either, because they may be inferred from Scripture by direct consequence: the Application is easie. What if you were offended that I should leave out some part of the Rubrick in my quotation of it, be pleased to take notice, that I omitted the last clause therein, because it would (had I read it) have occasioned the reading of the Rubrick before private Baptisme, for which there was then no time; however I desire you read it at your leisure, because I think it will be of concernment to you, in reference to your child; although I doe not own it as Scripture, yet I look upon it as agreeable unto Scripture. I shall rejoyce if God be pleased by these few lines to convince you of your error, so as to reclaim you; but if you persist to persist as heretofore, I shall endeavour to harden you no more therein, then Christ did the Pharisees in the like case: Whereas you say you are not willing to make any farther noise in this business, I doe not see how with convenience or modesty you can; but if you think the noyse thereof will prejudice me, I shall moderate you to spare me: One thing more I shall hint to you (which I hope you will close with) that no Infants have right to the priviledge of Baptisme, but those that are born of Christian Parents: whether you doe own the Principles of the Christian Faith I know not, (you never professed so much to me, which in such a case was requisite) This I am sure of, and others have been witnesses thereof, that your carriage in this business hath been no whit Christian towards them that are not Christians, as you are in Gods way.

It is possible have picked the least satisfaction from your letter, the doubt is thus stated; Whether (in case of necessity a Minister) be not bound to private Baptisme, (though not upon the Lords day) the whole drift of your writing is to prove the practicability and conveniency of publique Baptisme, a thing never by me denied or questioned, nor I think by any sober Christian, so that your letter in effect is in my thoughts no more than a begging of the question or shooting at Ravens without ever coming neere the mark.

Sir, I shall no further take notice of your uncharitableness in censuring, and the rectification wherewith you have stuffed your paper, then to tell you how sorry I am to see in a Preacher of the Kingdom of Christ so little of the Spirit of love and meeknesse; when you shall satisfie me in the generality of the opinions of pious and learned men in the true point in question, it is probable I may be convinced, in the mean time you cannot blame me if I dare not rely upon your own judgement, and by I know not what kind of implicite faith pin my conscience upon your or any other mans sleeve.

I have but two things to speak to in your letter, and I shall doe it, without any bitterness; the one relates to your self, the other to me; first, in one place you say you are not bound to act against your Judgement; in another that you looks upon the Common prayer though not as scripture, yet to be agreeable to Scripture; in my thoughts here is either a flat contradiction or some thing worse; if in your judgement, the Common prayer be agreeable to Scripture, you act against your judgement and conscience, in denying my child private Baptisme, which is a part of it, if it be not agreeable to Scripture you act against your judgement; and conscience in quoting it, and affirming it to be so: if this be not either to contradict or condemn your selfe in that which you allow, having done that to others you denied to me, I referre it to every judicious and sober-minded Christian.

The other relating to my self, is the doubt you make of my Christianity, in the close of your letter, and you seem to keep this as your great engine to batter the fabrick, what eagle you have in a fueled Church for many hundred years to raise such a doubt I know not; the rather where you have no cause to suspect, and where you see a constant frequenting of the Ordinances, my earnest desire to you, for the Baptizing of my child, was I think a sufficient Argument of my faith, to any moderate Christian Spirit, where if you had doubted you might have examined me, though even in that of Examination I am dubious whether it be in your power; I believe there are still many good Christians in *Wakefield* who never were under your examination, and I doe think it to be very hard and uncharitable to judge or sentence any man for want of it. Other things there are in your letter of lesse moment, which I am unwilling to take notice of. Sir, my prayers shall be for your self, and for all that serve at the Altar, that you may rather study to be a sample to your flock, then to Lord it over Gods heritage. If you please to give me an account of the Question wherein not only my self but the Parish is concerned, I shall not make use of any other Ministers for my satisfaction in the point, in the meane time I rest

Yours ROBERT ROGERS



Of publique Baptism, had been enough, had you duly weighed it, to have engaged you to bring your child to publique Baptism, it was the rule which the Apostle observed, not to use his liberty in all things, that were lawfull, but onely those things which were convenient. And it is an approved rule among Divines, that he that would keep a good conscience in such cases, wherein there appears any doubt, will make choice of the surer part, that is, that part wherein he may be sure not to offend against the Lord; now I think you will not deny but you had been on the surer part, had you brought it into the publique Congregation: Whereas you urge necessity, I answer, that it did not appear to me to be a case of necessity, nor does yet appear that it was so, if I should grant to you that private Baptism were lawfull in case of necessity, yet I suppose you will not say that every one must be judge of the necessity, and if the Minister does not so judge, I see not (that being duly considered above-written) how he can in conscience proceed to Administer it privately? you may accuse me as farre as you please of want of love and meeknesse, and have as low thoughts of me as you please in other respects, I beseech God he hath so farre given me a sight of my self, that none that know me think worse of me, then I doe of my self: All your tart expressions and harsh censures, together with your charging me with self-contradiction, or (to use your own words, somewhat worse) shall not (I hope) make me out of charity with you, neither you, nor any other shall find me backward to expresse my self, in any thing (wherein I may lawfully) as becomes a Minister of the Gospel: that private Baptism is against the judgement of the Generality of Protestant Divines is cleare to me, and also may be to you, if you will but consult Dr. *Usher's* body of Divinity, the judgement of the last Assembly of Divines sitting at *Westminster*, as also the Common-prayer book, for that the compilers thereof were in their judgements against private Baptism appears cleare to me, in that there is an expresse Injunction in case any had been baptized privately to make it afterwards publique: This you will find if you read the private Baptism. The contradiction with which you charge me is easily reconciled, if you doe but look upon my words, upon which you ground the aspersions, you shall find that they relate not to all the Common prayer in the whole Systeme of it, but onely to the Rubrick before private Baptism, which I look upon as agreeable to Scripture, for any unprejudicated understanding person read that passage of my letter, and if they doe not agree with me herein, I shall willingly be accounted a self-contradictor, though I look upon that Rubrick as agreeable to Scripture, yet I am not obliged thereby to Administer baptism privately, especially when I am not satisfied that it is a case of necessity. Whereas you charge me with deniall of that to you which I did to others, I answer that the case was very different: And I find the Apostle did the like, as you may see *Acts 16. 3.* compared with *Gal. 2. 3.* *Circumcised Timely*, yet would not *Circumcise Time*, nor suffer it; you constant attendance upon Ordinances I commend; but this together with a desire of having your child Baptized does not necessarily speak you to be a Christian, though (for my own part) I never denied your Christianity, but onely affirmed (which I still think) that your carriage in this business had not been Christian.

I have known many that have done both well, and yet have been  
gross Ignorance as was inconsistent with Christianity, taken in the largest sense.  
Whereas you question my power of Examination, I shall refer you to what you  
heard lately in publick about that subject, from a person more able to satisfy you  
then I am, I have not ever yet heard one syllable of Reason or Scripture against  
it, no nor any Protestant Divine: I cannot as yet see any thing that should in it  
against it, except Ignorance, or Pride, or both: if you can shew me sufficient  
grounds against it, I will leave it, and also give you many thanks, for it is a work  
that a man shall have little thanks for, and incurre much prejudice and displeasure  
by which I have experimentally found, yet dare not leave it; wherein you see me  
dominate over the flock, or give ill example to it, tell me privately, and I shall en-  
deavour to rectifie it: That the Church of England hath been for many hundred  
years, or one hundred years settled, unless in a Popish way, is wholly denyed by  
Sir, Yours as farre as he may for Christs sake,

Wakefield, March 26 55.

T. WALKER.

SIR, You should have received a quicker answer to your Letter, but my absence in  
York, and some other necessary occasions hindered me, I was upon the opening  
of your Letter full of expectation, in reference to my satisfaction in the case pro-  
pounded, but upon perusal of your paper, instead of arguments from Scripture  
you fly to a poor shift of self-satisfaction, and make your selfe the Judge of the  
necessity, I shall refer my selfe to any impartiall person in your Congregation  
whether the Mother with the Midwife, and others employed in business of this  
nature, be not the fitter Judges of the Sickness and danger of an Infant, and  
consequently of the pressing necessity then your selfe, except you will take upon  
you the office of a Midwife, as well as of the Minister.

What you still urge in reference to Publick Baptisme, I will say is farre from  
the matter in hand, or a meer begging or declining the Question; I never de-  
nied it, nay I proffered you twenty persons for a Congregation (Christ admits  
of a lesse number) because you seemed to stand upon that, also to bring in  
childe to the Church, though then in great weaknesse, did not I herein chuse the  
surer part? but it seems twenty are not a Congregation without a Sermon, a  
Exposition, and that is not to be had on the week day without hire. How well  
Demetrius playes his part, while good Soules grieve to see Christ and his Ori-  
nances thus bought and sold.

That the Compilers of Common Prayer were in their judgements against  
Private Baptisme, where Publick might be had without danger of the Infant,  
doubt not, but in such a case (which is the question in hand) their judgements  
are for it, as appears by the Rubrick, else why was not Complied it, nor was  
scribed a forme for it, your owne argument returnes upon your selfe, I could  
have wished satisfaction rather then sophistry; Dr. Usher I have an honourable  
and reverend opinion of, when you shall satisfy me out of him, I shall say no  
more to you, in the meantime I have so much charity as to think you will be-  
lieve him.

... Baptism, as a duty of necessity be agreeable to Scripture, why  
doe you not accordingly Administer it? if not, why doe you say it is, and quote  
it publickly as an Authority? this is either to contradict or condemn your self  
in what you allow, that poore lasting hole of self-satisfaction into which you  
run againe when all helps faile you, will not cleare the contradiction in the eyes  
of any knowing man.

That of the holy Apostles discussing of *Timothy* and not of *Timo*, whereby  
you would iustifie the Administering of Baptism to other infants Children and not  
to adults, (if you had well understood your self) little to the purpose the Apostle  
did it to show offence to Jew and Gentile, he became all things to all men,  
that he might by all means save some; it was that he might gaine both Jew and  
Gentile, how farre this is from your practise, I referre to the whole Congre-  
gation and to your own heart, offences are multiplied, weak Christians troubled  
with your practise, a party so adhered unto, that the rest are wholly call off  
from that party noted by all the people, besides Saint *Pauls* example in the infancy  
of the Church in matter of practice, cannot alwayes be a rule to us, whereas our  
example for all his shaving at *Cenchreae*, *1 Cor. 16. 18*: I know not whether your  
example be guilty of more irreverence or folly.

At your great *Dinner* of examination, you referre me I know not to whom,  
and therefore leave it; you tell me that neither Reason nor Scripture speak against  
it, which is it is a weak way of arguing, yet if you allow but the same for private  
use, your arguments destroye your selfe, what ever the Scriptures say of Exa-  
mination, I am sure your practise makes it necessary to the Ordinance, so as it  
cannot be had without it, and the neglect of it dangerous: and if that practise be  
without positive grounds from Scripture, you know where your threats must be.

My Christian with you apply to your self, but since you desire it, I shall with  
gravity propound these questions to you, what think you of him who shall in  
the face of a Congregation examine the Father of a child upon the accom-  
panying by all others who had their Children baptised the same time, what think  
you of him who shall Baptise a child without prayer before, or Thanksgiving after  
Baptism? what think you of him who for want of examination and not giving to  
the gods, shall turne a man out by head and shoulders from the Sacrament of the  
 Lords Supper? what think you of him who before morning Sermon shall refuse  
to baptize a wretched child upon the intreaty of the Parent, and then Baptize it af-  
ter Sermon when it is either dead or at the point of death? what do you think  
of him that shall publickly deny the Supremacy of the civil power in causes Ec-  
clesiasticall, withdrawing the flock, and withdrawing them from their obedience if  
they will not be Lord it over Gods heritage, I know not what it is, I hope you will  
be more careful of these things, in the mean time I have  
written these few lines for you as a Son of Peace,  
1676. and I will doe much more for you.  
I have not received any answer of this last Letter, therefore I Printed these  
Lines, in hope that they may fall into the hands of some Godly and Learned  
Man, that will endeavour to give the Church of God satisfaction in this point.

F I N I S